



Australian Bureau of Statistics

2007.0.55.001 - Census of Population and Housing: Topic Directions, 2021

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ABS tests topics for 2021 Census to reflect changing nation

Thanks to feedback from many individuals and organisations in the community, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) has identified new and existing topics for further testing and potential inclusion in the 2021 Census of Population and Housing.

The eight new topics to be tested are:

- chronic health conditions
- journey to education
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural identity
- current or previous service in the Australian Defence Force
- smoking status
- non-binary sex and/or gender identity
- sexual orientation, and
- more contemporary measures of household and family relationships, including shared care of children.

The ABS will also explore enhancing existing information collected in areas such as disability and young carers.

Two topics are proposed for possible removal from the 2021 Census:

- household internet access (as the question is now less relevant; with most households reporting that they can access the internet due to the growth in mobile devices), and
- the number of motor vehicles in a household (as the information is available from other data sources).

ABS Director responsible for Census topic consultations, Caroline Deans, said today that the ABS's topic review process was undertaken every Census to ensure information collected remains relevant as Australia changes.

"The ABS identified the topics to be considered for the 2021 Census following an extensive public consultation process between April and June this year. This included over 450 submissions received and meetings with a range of stakeholders," Ms Deans said.

"The ABS will now review these potential topics in-depth by consulting further with key stakeholders to refine data needs, ascertain statistical quality, assess cost and operational implications, and develop and test possible questions," she said.

“We want our most valuable dataset – the Census – to grow in its usefulness while not creating an unnecessarily long or complex form. This is especially important given the Census must be completed for every person in the country.”

A final list of recommended new topics will be presented to the Australian Government in mid-2019 for its decision on which topics to include in the 2021 Census. The ABS will list the final 2021 Census questions in an information paper in late 2020.

“The topic consultation process is consistent with the ABS’s key principles of building trust, engaging and delivering value, and is a key milestone in our planning to ensure a successful Census in 2021.”

Information collected in the Census underpins decisions impacting every aspect of the lives of Australians. The information is used for a range of purposes including setting electoral boundaries, allocating Australian Government funding to states and territories, planning educational and health services and other infrastructure for local communities.

The Census also allows us to understand the cultural, economic and social diversity of our communities, providing information about the population across small geographic areas and long-time trends in key aspects of the lives of Australians.

For more information view Census of Population and Housing: Topic Directions 2021 (cat.no.2007.0.55.001).



Visit www.abs.gov.au/census to access 2016 Census data (including by geography and other topics)

Learn about how the ABS upholds the privacy, confidentiality and security of the personal information it collects.

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